

U.S. Reps. Steven C. LaTourette (R-Concord Township) and Tim Ryan (D-Niles) today announced that the House of Representatives has passed legislation to make Ashtabula, Trumbull and Mahoning counties part of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC designation will make the counties eligible for greater federal funding for economic development projects.

The Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2007, H.R. 799, passed last night by a vote of 332-70 and will now move to the Senate for consideration. The bill adds 13 new counties in four states, including Ohio. LaTourette and Ryan have worked for several years to get the counties added to the region. The bill moved through the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, of which LaTourette is a senior member.

“Being part of the Appalachian Regional Commission will allow these counties to tap into federal funding that is set aside just for the geographic area,” LaTourette said. “Ashtabula and the other counties will now have a leg up on getting federal help for road, sewer, education and workforce training, health care and community revitalization projects.”

“This is another piece of the puzzle for the economic resurgence of our community,” said Ryan. “For the past several years, my friend Congressman LaTourette and I have worked hard for inclusion in the Appalachian Regional Commission because the grants and funding it provides will allow Trumbull and Mahoning to tackle some of

the most important issues facing our region."

LaTourette said the federal government provides annual funding to only three regional development agencies in the entire United States, and the two newest ones are modeled after the highly successful ARC, which was created more than 40 years ago in 1965. The other two are: the Denali Commission, which was established in 1998 and helps remote areas of Alaska; and the Delta Regional Authority, which was established in 2000 and helps communities along the Mississippi River in eight states from Illinois to the Louisiana Coast.

The Appalachian region is a 200,000-square-mile region that follows the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Nearly 23 million people live in the 410 counties in the region. The following Ohio counties are already part of the Appalachian region: Adams, Brown, Clermont, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, Washington, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Muskingum and Tuscarawas. Ashtabula, Mahoning and Trumbull counties are eligible to be added to the region because they meet economic standards and will be contiguous to other ARC counties.